



2 Peter Chapter Two

Summary of Chapter Two

Peter issues a heartfelt warning against the certainty that false teachers were already operating in and around the churches, and that what they preached would only lead those that followed them to disaster. He points out that they are doing this only for their own gain, and are not speaking the truth as it is given to us in the Gospel.

However, Peter is just as certain that these people will be severely punished by God at the appropriate time, along with any who choose to follow them. He supports his claim with historic references, where God had brought immediate judgement such as in the time of Noah or the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Peter gives a graphic account of just how wicked these people are and just how cancerous their teaching can become if people take note of it. However, God is able to lift those who are faithful out of their clutches, if they remain true and faithful to him.

IV 2 Peter 2:1-22 - False Teachers and Their Destruction

In this third main section of his letter, Peter engages in a polemic against the false teachers, using biblical analogies to do so. False teaching was something that had been an issue throughout the early days of the church as certain men wanted to impose their own beliefs on a church group, whether through their own misunderstanding, as an attempt to gain personal influence and power, or by the will of the devil. They have remained a problem throughout church history and will always be in evidence until the Lord returns.

IV.a 2 Peter 2:1-3 - Influence of false teachers

Peter now warns true believers that many times in the past, in the history of ancient Israel, that false prophets came forth to deceive and mislead the people. Peter also warns that this will be the case among his readership in that current time, and in the future as well. Jesus had warned: <<***Watch out for false***

prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves>> (Matthew 7:15), and: <<*At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'Look, there he is!' do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and miracles to deceive the elect – if that were possible*>> (Mark 13:21-22). He could also have warned against wolves in shepherd's clothing!

It seems that these false teachers were charismatic people who used half-truths to fool people, or offered them a much more attractive or even sensuous route to eternal salvation. The writers of the Dead Sea Scrolls accuse the Pharisees of being 'Seekers of Smooth Things', i.e. passing on easy interpretations to the people as in Isaiah 30:10, which claims: <<*They say to the seers, "See no more visions!" and to the prophets, "Give us no more visions of what is right! Tell us pleasant things, prophesy illusions*>>.

¹ But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them – bringing swift destruction on themselves.

2 Peter 2:1

A false prophets cost the life of a man of God: <<*The old prophet answered, "I too am a prophet, as you are. And an angel said to me by the word of the Lord: 'Bring him back with you to your house so that he may eat bread and drink water.'*" (But he was lying to him)>> (1 Kings 13:18), and they will do again. For the man of God in this story took the false prophet's words at face value, and was later killed by a lion for believing him, see 1 Kings 13:24. Most instances in life are not so dramatic, but false prophets and teachers can kill hope for the eternal soul.

Peter describes the false teachers. There is such a clear contrast between their distasteful and harmful work, especially compared to the Holy prophets of God that Peter had spoken of at the end of Chapter One, whose teachings were true and sound. These false teachers are the modern version of the false prophets from the OT and, just as they spoke lies in those days: <<*Her prophets are arrogant; they are treacherous men. Her priests profane the sanctuary and do violence to the law*>> (Zephaniah 3:4), so too the false teachers degrade the truth spoken by the apostles and true teachers of the faith. God had used Jeremiah to speak out against those who lie in the name of God: <<*This is what the Lord Almighty says: "Do not listen to what the prophets are prophesying to you; they fill you with false hopes. They speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the Lord"*>> (Jeremiah 23:16), and: <<*The visions of your prophets were false and worthless; they did not expose your sin to ward off your captivity. The oracles they gave you were false and misleading*>> (Lamentations 2:14). Paul had strongly warned the Ephesian elders that false teachers would come and so they did: <<*I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I*

never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears>> (Acts 20:29-31), and he had sent Timothy to Ephesus some years later to deal with the issue: <<As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God's work – which is by faith. The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Some have wandered away from these and turned to meaningless talk. They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm. We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers – and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me>> (1 Timothy 1:3-11). He advises Timothy again: <<The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron>> (1 Timothy 4:1-2).

False teachers do not have the Word of God or his Spirit within them. They live in darkness and were not a light in the darkness, as were the true Prophets and, of course, the Christ himself. The apostle John calls them antichrists: <<Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist>> (2 John 7). The Lord's brother speaks out against them also: <<For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord>> (Jude 4). Peter had stated this at the end of Chapter One: <<And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts>> (2 Peter 1:19). The prophet speaks of such false teachers as well: <<Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter>> (Isaiah 5:20).

Some commentators conclude, because Peter and Paul mostly refer to them as false teachers and not false Christs, false apostles or false disciples, that many of them may have originated from the Rabbinic schools, and were trying to Judaize Gentile converts. However, we also need to note that some of them were teaching the ways of the world, including sexual immorality, which would not have come from any reputable Jewish teacher. Thus we can conclude that there were many Gentile false teachers as well.

Secretly. They will subvert the truth by surreptitiously bringing destructive heresies into the church. These beliefs will be contrary to what Christ and the apostles laid down as foundational doctrines: <<Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of

God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit>> (Ephesians 2:19-22), resulting in spiritual ruin rather than true life.

Another form of secrecy is when the false teachers operate within their own family groups or close friendship circles, which is something Moses had warned of: **<<If your very own brother, or your son or daughter, or the wife you love, or your closest friend secretly entices you, saying, "Let us go and worship other gods" (gods that neither you nor your fathers have known, gods of the peoples around you, whether near or far, from one end of the land to the other), do not yield to him or listen to him. Show him no pity. Do not spare him or shield him>>** (Deuteronomy 13:6-8). Today, it would be better to show them love and correct them of their misguided ideas.

What should be taught is that there is one Christ, Lord of all; one baptism, one faith, one Spirit, one Word and one God. Anyone who teaches anything other than Christ died for the sins of all mankind and that God raised him from the dead, so that he now lives in heaven, interceding for his people before the Father, and will remain there until the time is right for him to come back to claim his inheritance, is teaching false doctrine and will pay heavily for it, that is, they will be bringing swift destruction on themselves; those who believe them and drift away from the truth will also pay a high price on the Day of Judgement. There are no secret doctrines or other private words of God that are known to a select few. There are no alternate lifestyles permitted because times have changed and God has changed with those times, and there is no truth that all people will eventually end up in heaven, irrespective of what they believe or how they act.

The false teachers will even deny the truth about the sovereign Lord Jesus Christ who bought them. Peter apparently uses the language of redemption, i.e. bought them, here in the same way that he describes the counterfeit salvation of the false teachers at the end of this chapter. That is, they claimed to be redeemed and saved because they were part of the church, but their apostasy showed that they were not truly believers.

Another interpretation is that Christ's death paid the penalty for their sins, once again bought them, but God did not apply this payment to them because they rejected Christ. Matthew Henry comments: "Damnable heresies are commonly brought in privily, under the cloak and colour of truth. Those who introduce destructive heresies deny the Lord that bought them. They reject and refuse to hear and learn of the great teacher sent from God, though he is the only Saviour and Redeemer of men, who paid a price sufficient to redeem as many worlds of sinners as there are sinners in the world".

The Lord who bought them. Paul too reminds faithful teachers of the cost and their responsibility: **<<Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood>>** (Acts 20:28). He does the same with other believers: **<<you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your**

body>> (1 Corinthians 6:20), and warns: *<<You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men>>* (1 Corinthians 7:23).

As was stated in the introduction that these false teachers have their own agenda, which may be to build something for themselves where they will have power and influence, or they may be representatives of Satan, as he so desperately tries to hold on to what is left of his defeated kingdom.

² Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute.

2 Peter 2:2

Peter warns that this rebellion will not be insignificant, but that many would follow their apostasy, so that the very foundation of the faith in Christ Jesus will be spoken against abusively with some justification, because of its portrayal by such people and the lifestyles of their followers. While drawing many to themselves, they will also succeed in turning many others away from the truth. Believers are warned to disassociate themselves from such people: *<<Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character”>>* (1 Corinthians 15:33), and: *<<But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God – having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them>>* (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

Many will follow. This is a sad fact that has been borne out over the years since Peter wrote this. Too few have chosen to live in the light of Christ because of their sinful nature and the draw that these false teachers have with their false doctrines that promote all sorts of unhealthy lifestyles. The basic problem is that many people want to be lord of their own life.

Their heresy will be characterised in part by their shameful ways or sensuality, Greek aselgeia, which means ‘lack of self-constraint or abandonment to immoral behaviour, which most often refers to sexual sin. The prophet had spoken out against the Northern Tribes of Israel for their apostasy: *<<Even when their drinks are gone, they continue their prostitution; their rulers dearly love shameful ways>>* (Hosea 4:18), whereas Paul sets out how it should be for the believer: *<<Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing>>* (2 Corinthians 4:2-3).

Bring the way of truth into disrepute refers to a degrading of the Gospel truth and its divine subject, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. There are many who will do all they can to pervert the truth because its reality can only convict them of their evil. God spoke through the prophet concerning these people: *<<“And now what do I have here?” declares the Lord. “For my people have been taken*

away for nothing, and those who rule them mock,” declares the Lord. “And all day long my name is constantly blasphemed”>> (Isaiah 52:5).

Roman governor Felix was a man who lived by shameful ways and found it very unpalatable when confronted with the Gospel truth: <<*Several days later Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess. He sent for Paul and listened to him as he spoke about faith in Christ Jesus. As Paul discoursed on righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and said, “That’s enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you.” At the same time he was hoping that Paul would offer him a bribe, so he sent for him frequently and talked with him*>> (Acts 24:24-26).

³ In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping.

2 Peter 2:3

Greed drives the false teachers as well. They exploit believers with their false words and made up stories for the sake of material advantage, as did David’s beloved son Absalom: <<*Absalom behaved in this way toward all the Israelites who came to the king asking for justice, and so he stole the hearts of the men of Israel*>> (2 Samuel 15:6), and Paul warns of what such treachery can lead to: <<*They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach – and that for the sake of dishonest gain*>> (Titus 1:11). It is only right that believers should give of their financial resources to help the work of the church, including the salaries of the paid staff. However, there are those who are clearly building up a following of their own that will lead them into personal wealth beyond that expected of their office. Paul writes how it should be: <<*Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, like men sent from God*>> (2 Corinthians 2:17), and: <<*You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed – God is our witness*>> (1 Thessalonians 2:5).

False teachers throughout history have been marked by sexual sin, a lust for money, and dishonesty. All such teachers face condemnation and destruction: <<*A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who pours out lies will perish*>> (Proverbs 19:9).

Their destruction has not been sleeping. There are some who believe that God’s apparent inaction against evil seems to indicate he is sleeping. There are evil doers who hope that he is. The prophet mocked the Baal worshippers about their god: <<*At noon Elijah began to taunt them. “Shout louder!” he said. “Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or travelling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened”*>> (1 Kings 18:27), but we can be assured that the true God does not sleep, does not miss anything and will deal with all people in an appropriate way and at the appropriate time.

IV.b 2 Peter 2:4-10a - Judgment of false teachers

Peter turns to a detailed argument proving God's certain judgment on the false teachers. He reasons that if God did not hold back from punishing the angels that sinned, he will not hold back from punishing these men either. The angels who sinned before the flood were delivered into pits of dense spiritual darkness, away from the enlightenment of God's unfolding purpose, where they await a final judgement, which does not bode well. It is a place where demons dread and once begged Jesus not to send them: <<*Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "Legion," he replied, because many demons had gone into him. And they begged him repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss*>> (Luke 9:30-31).

Peter uses a rabbinic form of proof that moves from minor premise to major premise or a lesser to greater argument, that is, if A is true, how much more is B also true, and his analogies in vv.4-8 amount to minor premises leading to the major premise of vv.9-10a.

⁴ For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment;

2 Peter 2:4

The first minor premise is: if God did not spare angels. If (A) God has eternally condemned the sinful angels, then (B) how much more certainly will he condemn the false teachers and their followers, the major premise in vv.9b-10a. The Lord's brother explains: <<*And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home – these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgement on the great Day*>> (Jude 6). The heart of Jude's comparison is the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority but apparently rebelled against God's authority and sought to be equal to him. God has kept these beings in eternal chains ever since. Some scholars think this refers to the original fall of angels from heaven. Others think Jude is referring to the sin of angels in Genesis 6:1-4 <<*When men began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. Then the Lord said, "My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years." The Nephilim were on the earth in those days – and also afterward – when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown*>>. This view is strengthened by Jude's citation of 1 Enoch 1.9 <<*Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him"*>> (Jude 14-15), which contains much discussion on the fall of these angels.

Sent them to hell. Peter uses the Greek word Tartarus rather than the more common word Gehenna. Gehenna translated the Hebrew word Gehinnom or Hinnom valley, which was just outside Jerusalem and where the entire city's rubbish was burned. It burned day and night, giving a glow that could be seen day

and night, reminding people of what it would be like to be in the fires of purgatory. Tartarus describes more of a dark, gloomy dungeon, where the worst of villains would normally be sent for extreme punishment.

Held for judgement. This view is confirmed in Scripture that all will one day come before the throne of grace to face judgement for what they have done during their lives. This applies to both humans and angels that have been cast out of the presence of God for their apostasy. For those that have turned their backs on God, it is something to be feared for: <<*It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*>> (Hebrews 10:31).

It may seem at times that God has forgiven unrepentant sinners, or overlooked them at least, such is the case when he permits these false teachers to apparently prosper. Firstly, he may be doing it to test the resolve of other believers to see if they will remain true to the faith. Secondly, we must remember that a reprieve is not the same as a pardon. They will receive their just reward if they do not repent: <<*For the wages of sin is death*>> (Romans 6:23a), without the associated gift that is then given to those who do repent: <<*but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord*>> (Romans 6:23b).

Likewise, with the angels who are far stronger and more magnificent than mankind, those who have chosen to sin against God are justly punished. Those who rebel against the God of heaven shall all be sent down to hell. There is no place or state between the height of glory and the depth of misery in which they shall be allowed to rest. If creatures sin in heaven, they must suffer in hell.

⁵ if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others;

2 Peter 2:5

The second minor premise: if (A) he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah with seven others, then (B) will he not even more certainly judge the false teachers, the major premise in vv.9b-10a, while at the same time preserving the godly in the major premise, v.9a. Christians may be a small minority, but God will protect them. God does not punish the righteous along with the wicked, but is merciful to them even though they are sinners too: <<*LORD, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, O LORD. Renew them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy*>> (Habakkuk 3:2). Those who perished were ungodly and therefore outside of divine protection, exposing them to total, everlasting destruction.

Ancient world translates the Greek word *arkhaiou*, from which we get the word archaic, which may conjure up images of a culture that was primitive, but clearly their behaviour was no different to much of that which Peter warns of in his letter.

A preacher of righteousness. Had this one man not remained faithful to God then history could have been very different for us all: <<*The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the*>>

*thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. So the Lord said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth – men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air – for I am grieved that I have made them." But Noah found favour in the eyes of the Lord. This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God>> (Genesis 6:5-9). During the best part of 100 years that he spent building the ark, Noah preached to the people to repent and turn to God, but no one paid any heed to this preacher of righteousness, so God brought the flood on its ungodly people. Thus they were without excuse, something that Paul confirms: <<*For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse*>> (Romans 1:20).*

Noah is an excellent example of what a man can achieve in the eyes of God if he remains faithful: <<*By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith*>> (Hebrews 11:7). He was a man that his parents knew would be a comfort to them and now to us too: <<*When Lamech had lived 182 years, he had a son. He named him Noah and said, "He will comfort us in the labour and painful toil of our hands caused by the ground the Lord has cursed*>> (Genesis 5:28-29).

Seven others refers to Noah's wife, his three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth, and their wives. From these people the whole world can trace their human ancestry, thus showing there is no place for racism, especially not in the church.

⁶ if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly;

2 Peter 2:6

The third minor premise: Peter sees the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah as a type of judgment or a divine foreshadowing by fire on the last day: <<*But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat*>> (2 Peter 3:10-12), an event that will be denied by false teachers (v.4). If (A) God condemned Sodom and Gomorrah, then (B) how much more certain it is that the same thing will happen to the ungodly who reject the Gospel.

Made them an example. God's awesome and destructive power was clearly on display to demonstrate just how righteous he is and how determined he is to deal with those who choose such unholy lifestyles: <<*In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment*>>

of eternal fire>> (Jude 7). Yet we still choose to live like that today, thus Paul can say: <<*For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse*>> (Romans 1:20), as does King David: <<*No one whose hope is in you will ever be put to shame, but they will be put to shame who are treacherous without excuse*>> (Psalm 25:3).

Many years before Peter wrote this letter, God warned Jerusalem of its apostasy, citing Sodom as an example of how he will deal with such treachery: <<*Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. They were haughty and did detestable things before me. Therefore I did away with them as you have seen*>> (Ezekiel 16:49-50). Sodom had been a wealthy city, sited in a lush, fertile plain: <<*Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered, like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, toward Zoar. (This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah)*>> (Genesis 13:10). It seems to be that it is the wealthy parts of the world that are easily drawn away from God into such depravity and they pay a heavy price for it.

What is going to happen to the ungodly. This is not a question but a statement. For God, despite his almost infinite patience with mankind, intermittently shows his displeasure by dealing with people appropriately as recently noted: <<*They were haughty and did detestable things before me. Therefore I did away with them as you have seen*>> (Ezekiel 16:50), while the rest can be assured they will be judged at the appropriate time.

⁷ and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men ⁸ (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard) –

2 Peter 2:7-8

The fourth minor premise: if (A) God rescued Lot, who was greatly distressed and even tormented by the conduct of the wicked in Sodom (v.6), then (B) how much more will he rescue the godly, the major premise in v.9a.

Some have questioned whether Lot was truly righteous, given the serious sins he committed, see Genesis Chapter 19. But the righteous are never considered to be perfect, and God does not judge a man based on individual acts, good or bad, but on his overall character and his heart. Moreover, Scripture distinguishes Lot from the citizens of Sodom in that he received the angelic visitors and attempted to protect them from harm when the other inhabitants wanted to rape them – a crucial and courageous action in his lawless and morally depraved environment. It is no wonder that Peter describes it as the filthy lives of lawless men.

Peter's references here to Noah, Lot and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah show that he, like Paul and many other great men of God, accepted the true historicity of these people and the events that are written about them. Jesus too confirms this: <<*Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating, drinking,*

marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulphur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed>> (Luke 17:26-30).

God erased much of his creation by water and destroyed several cities with fire, turning the surrounding area from fertile ground into a wasteland. This same God can also save people from these same elements: <<When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze>> (Isaiah 43:2).

⁹ if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment. ^{10a} This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature and despise authority.

2 Peter 2:9-10a

Having stated his minor premises, Peter moves now to his major premise: If vv.4-8 are true, then how much more true are vv.9-10a.

God indeed knows how to rescue the godly from trials, as he did with Paul on a number of occasions: <<You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings – what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them>> (2 Timothy 3:10-11), and: <<The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen>> (2 Timothy 4:18). David, too, was frequently dependent on God and knew he had to continually cry out to him for help: <<O Lord my God, I take refuge in you; save and deliver me from all who pursue me>> (Psalm 7:10), and: <<A righteous man may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all>> (Psalm 34:19). Of course, Peter himself had been rescued from death at the hands of King Herod Agrippa, when Jesus sent an angel to lead him out of prison: <<The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. “Quick, get up!” he said, and the chains fell off Peter’s wrists. Then the angel said to him, “Put on your clothes and sandals.” And Peter did so. “Wrap your cloak around you and follow me,” the angel told him. Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him. Then Peter came to himself and said, “Now I know without a doubt that the

Lord sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were anticipating">> (Acts 12:6-11).

This does not mean that believers will be exempt from some of the trials of life that we fail to understand; for example, those that die in natural disasters, in accidents, through illness or as the result of war or atrocity. This also applies to people who we might consider to be good in human terms but have not yet come to faith. We just have to trust that God has it all in hand. If these things were for us to know then he would have revealed them to us!

To hold or reserve indicates not so much that they are cast into a dungeon like the fallen angels but that God has them marked out in some special way when it comes to judgement. It may simply be that their names are not in the Lamb's Book of Life and they will face due punishment: <<*If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire*>> (Revelation 20:15).

In the case of Peter's audience, this would have evoked hope of divine deliverance from the false teachers and their influence. God also will certainly keep the unrighteous under punishment until the Day of Judgment. He will punish them in a partial, preliminary way before the final Day of Judgment: <<*In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire'*>> (Luke 16:23-24), and: <<*Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment*>> (Hebrews 9:27). This applies to, that is, especially true of those who engage in defiling passions, i.e. follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature, and who despise authority, probably a reference again to the false teachers, see v.12 and v.18. Also: <<*First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires*>> (2 Peter 3:3), <<*In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings*>> (Jude 8), and: <<*These men are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage. But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. They said to you, "In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires"*>> (Jude 16-18).

While continuing their punishment. Those who are not believers and judge their current lives by worldly standards may not consider themselves to be under punishment in this life, but they are, for God is not with them and they are bereft of his blessing in their life in so many ways, even though he may still care for them and be walking with them. But if God judged the new young world the way he did in Noah's day, how will he now deal with those who continue the same lifestyle in the Gospel era. Jesus gave due warning of this: <<*And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day*>> (Matthew 11:23). But such warnings seem to be in vain and to have fallen on deaf ears.

Despise authority. These false teachers who despise authority come under scrutiny in several ways. They are despising the authority of the true teachers in

the church and therefore are rebelling against God himself. But we also need to remember that it is God who has set up the civil authorities to govern his world on a day to day basis until the day comes when Jesus will take on the full government of the world. Peter has spoken on civil obedience before: <<***Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men***>> (1 Peter 2:13-15), as does Paul: <<***Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God***>> (Romans 13:1). Jesus commands: <<***Then give to Cæsar what is Cæsar's, and to God what is God's***>> (Luke 20:25b).

IV.c 2 Peter 2:10b-16 - Character of false teachers

Peter gives a lengthy description of the debased character of the false teachers. He contrasts these men's behaviour with that of the faithful angels who, although they are stronger and more powerful than men, do not dare to bring an accusation in abusive terms out of their reverential fear and respect for God as judge of all.

^{10b} **Bold and arrogant, these men are not afraid to slander celestial beings; ¹¹ yet even angels, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not bring slanderous accusations against such beings in the presence of the Lord.**

2 Peter 2:10b-11

The false teachers are **bold** in a reckless, foolhardy way and **arrogant**, stubborn and wilful, behaving in ways that even the **angels** avoid. They **slander celestial beings**, which some commentators hold to be the evil angels due to the statement in v.11. However, this may not be the case for: <<***In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings. But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"***>> (Jude 8-9). In bringing this slander, they recklessly dismiss any thought that these forces have power or that their wilful sins will open them up to demonic attack. But good angels, like wise humans, do not take these evil powers lightly; and do take the wrath of God seriously.

¹² **But these men blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are like brute beasts, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like beasts they too will perish.**

¹³ **They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done. Their idea of pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight. They are blots and blemishes, revelling in their pleasures while they feast with you.**

2 Peter 2:12-13

The false teachers operate in irrational ways. Since they are like brute beasts, they act like creatures of instinct, following neither reason nor truth but personal desires, ignoring even the most basic of human values: <<*I was senseless and ignorant; I was a brute beast before you*>> (Psalm 73:22). Their instincts are carnal; they are given over to the desires of their sinful nature, with their ignorance leading to evil thoughts and words that can only lead to destruction, both theirs and anyone else that follows them. Jude concurs: <<*Yet these men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand; and what things they do understand by instinct, like unreasoning animals – these are the very things that destroy them*>> (Jude 10).

Yet they behave like this while posturing as Christians, even to the point that they feast with you, possibly a reference to the Lord's Supper, although it could just be a reference to either social meals or symbolic of attending meetings where true believers would be feasting on the Word of God, or just his presence: <<*How priceless is your unfailing love! Both high and low among men find refuge in the shadow of your wings. They feast on the abundance of your house; you give them drink from your river of delights. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light*>> (Psalm 36:7-9).

They are guilty of profound blasphemy and live licentiously, although not for long in God's economy: <<*But the wicked will perish: The Lord's enemies will be like the beauty of the fields, they will vanish – vanish like smoke*>> (Psalm 37:20).

Carouse in broad daylight. Neither Peter, nor the bible generally, is against people enjoying themselves, but what is meant here is that these people are doing so at a time when most others are working. The intimation being that they will be partying at the expense of their followers, and doing so in a way that brings disrepute to the faith they claim to be representing. They do so through over indulgence for which they will pay the price: <<*Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things*>> (Philippians 3:19). Paul calls for a different standard: <<*Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy*>> (Romans 13:13).

Blots and blemishes. Believers in Christ are called to be without spot or blemish. However, these men that Peter speaks of cause nothing but harm and damage to the life that God wants his children to live; one where love of neighbour is high on the agenda. These people have no heed for their neighbour, unless there is a profit in it for them, as they lead or seek lives of lust and luxury - a life of self-interest and self-indulgence.

¹⁴ **With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable; they are experts in greed – an accursed brood!**

2 Peter 2:14

Some commentators say this means their eyes desire adultery with virtually every woman they meet, insatiable for sin. Their appetite for sin is never satisfied. Even

worse, they seduce, Greek delezō, which means entice or lure with bait, the unstable, i.e. vulnerable people to join them in their debauchery. Sexual sin and greed characterise these false teachers. However, adultery often refers to an act of worshipping someone or something other than God: <<*I gave faithless Israel her certificate of divorce and sent her away because of all her adulteries. Yet I saw that her unfaithful sister Judah had no fear; she also went out and committed adultery. Because Israel's immorality mattered so little to her, she defiled the land and committed adultery with stone and wood. In spite of all this, her unfaithful sister Judah did not return to me with all her heart, but only in pretence,*>> (Jeremiah 3:8-10), and: <<*With a mighty voice he shouted: "Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great! She has become a home for demons and a haunt for every evil spirit, a haunt for every unclean and detestable bird. For all the nations have drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries. The kings of the earth committed adultery with her, and the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries"*>> (Revelation 18:2-3).

Eyes full of adultery can also be read as this is what they are continually thinking about, whether they participate in it or not. Adultery has always been a sin in God's eyes but Jesus raised the bar with his teaching: <<*But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart*>> (Mathew 5:28).

This seduction is not limited to religious sects that gather to themselves vulnerable people, drawn in by what is on offer. We also see it in mainstream education that teaches evolution without reference to creation for example. It can also be witnessed on many TV documentaries that are biased away from the teachings of God, so that the wider population believe what they see and hear to be true.

Accursed brood! Peter assures his readers that the heretics are under God's curse.

¹⁵ They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Beor, who loved the wages of wickedness.

¹⁶ But he was rebuked for his wrongdoing by a donkey – a beast without speech – who spoke with a man's voice and restrained the prophet's madness.

2 Peter 2:15-16

Straight way is probably intended to indicate following the ways of the Lord in leading a godly life. David requests such guidance from God: <<*Lead me, O Lord, in your righteousness because of my enemies – make straight your way before me*>> (Psalm 5:8). Those who do not follow the path wander off to become like lost sheep: <<*What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off?*>> (Matthew 18:12), although it would seem that these men wander off to become wolves.

They have followed the way of Balaam, see Numbers Chapters 22-24, which is a life spent gaining things at other people's expense by means of wrongdoing.

Balaam, Hebrew for swallower or one that consumes things, was particularly condemned for his greed. He was supposedly a man of spiritual insight, but God can use even a donkey to restrain someone who is following the way of madness rather than living as a rational, responsible human being. See Numbers 22:21-41 for the account of Balaam's donkey, where his divine enable speech prevented the spiritually blind Balaam from being slain by God's angel.

The prophet's madness was nothing to do with mental illness, but his conduct, as he had made a deliberate choice to be separated from the will of God.



Although he had followed God's decree not to curse the Israelites as the Moabite King Balak wanted him to, as this would have contravened a direct instruction from God. Although Balaam was faithful in blessing the Israelites, he did tell the king that he could use the Moabite women to tempt the Israelite men to worship their gods and received payment for doing so, i.e. he received the wages of wickedness.

The Israelites were duly tempted into idolatry so God had the rulers of these men strung up on the gallows and 24,000 others were slain in one day.

That was the punishment of following the word of false teachers. The ass seems to represent a beast of burden that allows itself to be ridden by those that would rule over them. This seems to be the essence of what Peter is telling his readership. Don't be an ass - avoid the false teachers at any cost!

Followed the way of Balaam. Jesus has taken issue with the church in Pergamum for this very reason: <<*Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality*>> (Revelation 2:14).

It is interesting that God selected men like Balaam and Caiaphas to prophesy from time to time. It appears that he chose them in a similar way to that of choosing Judas Iscariot to be a disciple of Jesus!

IV.d 2 Peter 2:17-22 - Influence of false teachers revisited

False teachers lead astray weaker people, enticing them back into lives of sin. Peter likens such men to dry wells or a mist that is soon dispersed by a strong wind, neither of which serves any good purpose, and they can accomplish nothing that is of God.

Peter goes on to show that their future is spiritually dark and that only darkness is reserved for them forever. These men are in contrast to the truth, and yet the truth never gets into their hearts, nor do they make any spiritual progress for that reason.

However, such people seem to offer something that entices newer, vulnerable people who were seeking the faith but have been drawn by the lies these teachers proclaim so boldly, and that seem to offer a truth which is appealing to their sinful nature that still has a strong hold on their immature lives.

¹⁷ These men are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. Blackest darkness is reserved for them.

2 Peter 2:17

The false teachers are springs without water, i.e. they promise refreshment and bring none, and mists driven by a storm, that is, they sow confusion wherever they go, devoid of any inherent value. The gloom of utter darkness has been reserved, the Greek word *tēreō*, which means keep, guard, hold, or preserve, for them, as for the evil angels - note held in v.4, and the unrighteous - hold in v.9.

Blackest darkness is reserved for them. These false teachers and those that choose to follow them may live in what they think is natural light but this clause provides imagery for the darkest recesses of the earth, where no light can penetrate; a place that God has set aside to eternally detain those who have so willingly rejected his love, grace and mercy: *<<They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power>>* (2 Thessalonians 1:9), and: *<<They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever>>* (Jude 13).

Jesus Christ was of course the source of living water: *<<Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water">>* (John 4:10), *<<Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him>>* (John 7:38), *<<For the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes>>* (Revelation 7:17), and: *<<Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations>>* (Revelation 22:1-2).

¹⁸ For they mouth empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the lustful desires of sinful human nature, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error.

2 Peter 2:18

The false teachers entice by lustful desires, those who are barely escaping from the clutches of sin. They prey on newly professed Christians, teaching that they can do whatever they wish sexually and no harm will come of it. It is very sad to know that there are those who had escaped the clutches of the worst effects of sin, only to be drawn back to it again.

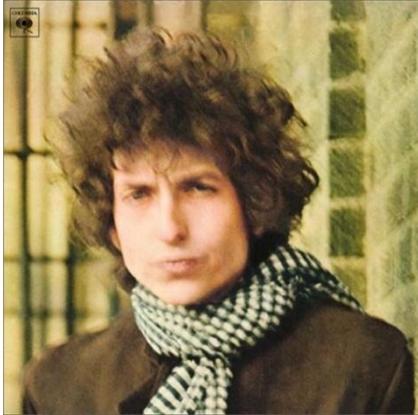
Who live in error. Life is never black or white but Peter is quite clear here that to choose the ways of the false teachers is an error. Not just an error of judgement but an eternally fatal error that can only be corrected through true repentance that will be rewarded by God's gracious mercy.

¹⁹ They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity – for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him.

2 Peter 2:19

The false teachers operate under the guise of freedom, but in actuality they entice others to become as they are, slaves of depravity and corruption, once again overcome by evil. The supposed freedom offered by such teachers is actually licentiousness to sin through all sorts of depravity, be it sexual sin, i.e. living with a partner, gluttony or self-indulgence. This is not freedom but captivity as they are slaves of depravity: *<<Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator – who is forever praised. Amen. Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done>> (Romans 1:24-28), and: <<Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey – whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?>> (Romans 6:16), but those who turn to Christ for their salvation have true freedom: *<<To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?" Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed>> (John 8:31-36). Paul also gives due warning: <<You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love>> (Galatians 5:13).**

A man is a slave to whatever has mastered him. Mankind has always sought freedom but the reality is that we all have a master. Those who are poor or even those who have to work for others to earn a living are beholden to their master. Even those who are wealthy have a master. The choice we have is whether that master is God or Satan.



If we do not overtly give ourselves to God's service then we unintentionally serve Satan. Peter doesn't mention Satan at this point but, in his song 'Gotta Serve Somebody', Bob Dylan does, for the chorus states:

You're gonna have to serve somebody,
Well, it may be the devil or it may be the Lord
But you're gonna have to serve somebody.

If you find the song on YouTube, you will see that Bob Dylan writes about all sorts of people in various walks of life, especially the powerful and wealthy, and, although he alludes to them being served in their own lives, he goes on to claim they have to serve somebody too. There is no middle ground. You are either in Adam or in Christ! Those who follow the false teachers have chosen to stay in the Adamic era.

²⁰ If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. ²¹ It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them. ²² Of them the proverbs are true: "A dog returns to its vomit," and, "A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud."

2 Peter 2:20-22

Peter shows that a state of ignorance would actually have been better than that of apostasy, for those that had come to know the Lord, or at least have knowledge of him and what he offered have just as much to lose when they turn away from Christ as unbelievers do, but they also know what it is they have lost and where their destiny lies.

In fact, Paul suggests there may be some hope for those who are ignorant for this was the case with Gentiles before the Gospel message came: <<*The one who is not circumcised physically and yet obeys the law will condemn you who, even though you have the written code and circumcision, are a lawbreaker*>> (Romans 2:27), indicating that those who are ignorant of the Gospel may in fact be living by God's will. This is not a chance I would like to take or a path I would recommend to anyone!

Again entangled in it and overcome. To have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord only to fall back into their old Adamic ways through their sinful nature warns us just what a battle life is for those who want to remain in the light of God for all eternity. Those who follow the false teachers are perishing: <<*They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved*>> (2 Thessalonians 2:10b). Peter had earlier written: <<*Through these he*

has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires>> (2 Peter 1:4).

It would have been better for these false teachers, or more likely it is their followers here, never to have escaped the world in the first place, than to follow in the path of the knowledge of Christ, only to abandon that path and return to a life of sin and darkness. The warnings of Jesus apply so vividly for such people: <<*“When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, ‘I will return to the house I left.’ When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first. That is how it will be with this wicked generation”>> (Matthew 12:43-45). The writer to the Hebrews states: <<*If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left>> (Hebrews 10:26), i.e. if you turn your back on the truth of Christ, you have nowhere else to go!**

One reason it is better not to have known about the sacred command is that those who turn away after falsely confessing the Christian faith will not be inclined to consider Christ again. Another reason is that their knowledge and experience of the Christian life makes them more accountable before God: <<*That servant who knows his master’s will and does not get ready or does not do what his master wants will be beaten with many blows. But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked>> (Luke 12:47-48).*

Some commentators understand these verses to teach that true believers can lose their salvation. It is more likely that Peter refers to those who appeared to be Christians but then showed by their apostasy and their behaviour that they never truly belonged to Christ. God promises that those who truly know him will never fall away because he will keep them by his grace: <<*My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand>> (John 10:27-29), <<*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died – more than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?**

Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord>> (Romans 8:28-39), and: <<In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus>> (Philippians 1:4-6).

Those who do turn their backs show that their true character is like that of a dog: <<As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly>> (Proverbs 26:11) or a sow. They appeared to have been saved, but by returning to the vomit and mire of the world, they demonstrated that they were never truly regenerated.

Peter has given a strong warning against the dangers posed by the false teachers who are such a threat to the church. He now turns his attention to informing them that the church age is the final part of the story and that Christ will return as he has promised.